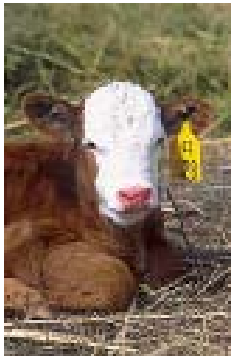


Protecting Your Herd

Bovine TB spreads in droplets coughed or sneezed into the air, or by consumption of contaminated water, feed, or milk. Disease can spread from cattle to other animals, and from other animals to cattle. Bovine TB usually spreads between herds by movement of infected cattle. To protect your herd, practice good biosecurity and know the source of your replacement animals. Consider TB testing new animals before they enter your herd. Maintain the permanent identification of animals and keep records of animals moving into and out of your herd.



Bovine TB in People

The risk of people getting bovine TB from animals in the U.S. today is extremely remote; bovine TB is very rare. All carcasses are carefully inspected and, if infected, are rejected from the human food chain. The bacterium causing TB is killed when meat is cooked and milk is pasteurized, hence these products are safe to eat. As most TB spreads in droplets being inhaled, it is very unlikely that a person would become infected with bovine TB from exposure to an infected carcass. People who drink raw milk from infected cattle, and workers who are in prolonged close contact with infected animals are at most risk. People who come into close contact with TB-infected animals are encouraged to take extra precautions, and may wish to contact the Department of Health Services. Remember, most people get TB from other people, not from livestock.

Your veterinarian is an excellent source of information on bovine TB.
For more information contact:

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California Department of Food and Agriculture

<http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/>

Animal Health Branch

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Sacramento, CA 95814

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Modesto District	(209) 491-9350
Tulare District	(559) 685-3500
Ontario District	(909) 947-4462

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Veterinary Services

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For Public Health Questions Contact:

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Office of Public Affairs
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Animal Health and Food Safety Services
Animal Health Branch

Bovine Tuberculosis

An Update for California Livestock Producers



2006

General

Tuberculosis (TB) is a serious bacterial disease that usually affects the respiratory system. Animals infected with TB may not show signs for years, and animals that appear healthy can transmit infection to other animals. Three main types of TB occur: human, avian, and bovine. Human TB is rarely transmitted to non-humans, avian TB is typically restricted to birds (pigs and occasionally other animals have been affected), and bovine TB (cattle TB) can infect most mammals, including humans.

Bovine TB has affected animal health throughout recorded history. A U.S. eradication program for bovine TB began in the early 1900's. It included skin-testing cattle and monitoring animals sent to slaughter. California has participated in this program for nearly a century, and bovine TB has nearly been eradicated from cattle in the U.S.

California Outbreak

Bovine TB was confirmed in three dairy herds during 2002-2003. Infection was first detected in May 2002 in a Tulare County herd. A second Tulare County dairy herd was confirmed as infected in December 2002 after a single infected cow was identified while investigating the first affected dairy. A Kings County dairy herd became California's third infected herd after an infected cow was detected at a California slaughterhouse in late December 2002.



All three herds were quarantined, the cattle depopulated and the affected premises cleaned and disinfected. Cattle sold from or associated with each herd over the previous five years were traced and tested. After successfully completing the cleaning and disinfection, the quarantines were released and restocking begun. Cattle repopulating these herds were tested several times to ensure they remained free of TB.

Source of the Disease

Although the source of the infections was not confirmed, the investigations indicate TB was most likely imported in infected cattle.

California's TB-Free Status

A state's status is based on disease in cattle and bison, the effectiveness of the eradication program, and compliance with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) standards. In April 2003, California was classified as Modified Accredited Advanced because it no longer met the USDA requirements for a Free state. This classification required all breeding cattle to have a negative TB test before leaving the state.



It takes a minimum of two years after depopulating the last infected herd before a state is eligible to regain Free status. If infected herds are not depopulated (but use a test and removal program to eradicate infection) the state must wait a minimum of five years after the herd has tested-free before re-applying for Free status.

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), USDA, and the cattle industry worked together to control and eradicate bovine TB. After depopulating the infected herds, extensive tracing and testing cattle associated with the herds, and testing over 700,000 cattle in Tulare, Kings and Fresno counties, California regained its TB-Free status in April 2005.



Plans to Maintain TB-Free Status

Surveillance for TB is critical for demonstrating freedom from bovine TB. California leads the nation in slaughterhouse surveillance, the primary method for detecting new cases. All cattle slaughtered in meatpacking plants are inspected for signs of TB. California's plants detected two of the three herds in this outbreak. Regular monitoring of the quantity and quality of surveillance samples continues to ensure TB is detected immediately.

Testing live cattle is also crucial for maintaining California's Free status. In August 2003, California mandated that all breeding dairy cattle entering the state have a negative TB test to reduce the risk of them bringing disease into the state. To ensure the surveillance testing is being done correctly, the test results from private veterinarians are being monitored.